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LONG ISLANDERS CELEBRATE PORTUGUESE ELEVATION

LISBON -- The Lusitanian Church of Portugal became a full member of the Anglican Communion on July 5 at a eucharist and special ceremony in the Lusitanian Cathedral in Lisbon.


The concelebrants were Bishop Luis Pereira, Bishop of the Lusitanian Church, Bishop Daniel Cabral of Oporto and Bishop John Howe, Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council representing the Archbishop of Canterbury. A statement indicating the integration of the Church into the Anglican Communion was read by the Revd. Professor Henry Chadwick.

Anglican representatives at the eucharist were from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales with 20 members of the Lusitanian Church's companion Diocese of Long Island in the Episcopal Church also attending. The Rev. Canon Edmund Olifiers led the Long Island delegation and represented Presiding Bishop John M. Allin. Bishop Pereira spent time this winter and spring in the American diocese.

The Lusitanian Church, with the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church applied to the Archbishop of Canterbury for "full integration" into the Anglican Communion in the spring of 1978.

A Commission set up by the Primates Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor H. Chadwick, which reported to the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 1979, recommended that the request be agreed to. The two Churches will be extra-Provincial dioceses under the metropolitan authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury in his capacity as the focus of unity of the Anglican Communion throughout the world, and as President of both the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council.

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The two Iberian Churches had their beginnings in the reform movements in Spain and Portugal 100 years ago. At that time neither regarded themselves as "new" churches, but as a restoration of the true tradition. From the earliest days they have been deeply influenced by Anglican doctrine and practice.

In 1880 H. C. Reley, the first Episcopal bishop of Mexico, visited Spain and Portugal at the suggestion of the 1878 Lambeth Conference and this led to the organization of synodical government in the churches. Later on a close relationship developed between the Churches and the Archbishop of Armagh (Ireland). They have been in a relationship of full communion with Anglican churches for many years.

Both churches are numerically small. The Lusitanian Church has 3,000 members in 17 congregations mainly around Lisbon and Oporto. Nine of its 15 priests are self-supporting. their bishop is assisted by a new auxillary bishop, Dr. Fernando Soares, and the bishop of Oporto. The Spanish Church is smaller with about 2,000 members in 11 congregations dispersed throughout the country served by eight priests and a deacon. Their bishop is the Rt. Revd. Ramon Taibo.

The report of the Commission which recommended full integration stresses that this act should not be misunderstood as an attempt to foster "a rival Catholicism in Europe, side by side and in conscious antithesis to the Roman Catholic Church in the Iberian Peninsula."

It pays tribute to the achievement of Anglican-Roman Catholic Conversations and sees the acceptance of full membership of the Anglican Communion by the Iberian Churches as "implying an openness and readiness for brotherly fellowship with the Roman Catholic Church in Portugal and Spain."

The Spanish Church will officially enter the Anglican Communion during its Synod to be held later this year.

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